

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Why Not In Connecticut?



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

Now that it is September (already?), I finally took off a Friday and Saturday two weeks ago to head to Pittsburgh for Notre Dame's season opening football game. (Don't worry, this is not a column about how the Fighting Irish finally seem to be headed back to the top of the national polls; although that would be a very worthwhile topic!). I had not visited in some thirty years, and heard much about how the 'Burgh has been reborn. Even so, I was not prepared for the different, and upbeat city that I saw.

Not only was there a great deal of new construction, the variety was intriguing. Of course, there were the almost new Heinz Field, home of the Steelers and the University of Pitt Panthers, and the also 'newish' PNC Park, home to the Pirates. Of course, both are any easy stroll across the Allegheny from downtown, and conveniently accessible by every mode of transport you can think of.

Speaking of transportation, I had not remembered such an accessible highway system; further, there seemed to be an extensive highway modernization construction project in progress almost everywhere you went in Western Pennsylvania. In addition, signage was exceptionally clear, modern and coordinated, and despite the number of highways and bridges, if there was a toll booth anywhere, I never ran across it. And as you know, the three rivers all meet at downtown Pittsburgh, and not only were the waterways clean and busy with private boats, there were a variety of tourist cruises on (at least five different) old-style riverboats, not to mention a river shuttle service, where you could make unlimited trips and stops around the Metro area for one mere \$8 per day charge.

Not only was there an architecturally intriguing variety of large new office buildings, and more under construction, there was a bustling, busy restaurant district in "the Strip" (I did not recall Pittsburgh having been distinguished for cuisine!), the parks and all of downtown for that matter was remarkably clean, free of graffiti and trash, the riverbanks were clear or landscaped.... O.K. you have probably already discerned my point that, in the phrasology of one of my college roommates familiar with the old Pittsburgh, it was back then, "a dump" and now looks very, very different!

And what does this have to do with Connecticut state government issues? Would you be surprised to know that after only a few hours of being impressed at how Pittsburgh had been substantially changed from what I remembered, that it occurred to me that if the Pittsburghs of the world (like Baltimore and other large eastern U.S. cities) could successfully reinvent themselves, why can't relatively smaller cities like Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford get going? Hartford, of course, is on the Connecticut River, the other two have large, attractive harbors; and isn't Connecticut home to considerably more affluence as working capital than Western Pennsylvania?

Of course, I have no doubt that some would want to point out that in their view, we are not devoting enough State funding to our cities, but the truth is that these three of our cities gobble up nearly 30% of the municipal and educational funding of the entire State. In this year's budget alone, Bridgeport gets almost \$180 million, Hartford \$220 million, New Haven \$190 million...., you get the idea. And one would have a difficult time in blaming Republicans for our big-City situation, since every Mayor in recent memory from those cities, and every legislator representing them, has been a member of the party that has long held control of both houses of the Connecticut legislature. At least there may be some reason for optimism for Hartford with the new Convention Center recently opened, and with a healthy amount of business already booked.

So good reader, keep in mind that here is one more disadvantage to involvement in State government; even a brief weekend trip out-of-town reminds you of too many topics that you thought you left in Connecticut!

Thanks to those who took the time to respond to our "audience participation" request with comments on the new Estate Tax that was enacted in this year's Session; keep your comments coming!

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.